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evident. It is entirely possible to strip of technicalities a very large number of economic principles and make them simpler than the problems of mathematics with which a child of ten years is expected to grapple.

To secure this result it is, in my judgment, best to impart the knowledge first in a conversational way and with an abundance of questioning, which will enlist the pupil's interest and set his reasoning powers at work. After such a preparation a very simple textbook is useful. This plan exacts from the teacher something which may not always be supplied, but it would be strange if in any large school it were not possible to find some teacher capable of supplying it. The extent in the United States to which economics is now taught is all in favor of the plan. Probably in no country in the world are courses of instruction in this science given in so many schools as in our country. Though we have more teachers and more students of economics than other nations, we need more than we have; for we have a correspondingly large number of self-assertive citizens, who, whether they know anything of economics or not, will take a practical hand in legislating on the subject. It is well that in various directions they should have interest enough to act promptly and insight enough to avoid blunders. It is well that our business machinery should be steadily improved and that the outlook for workers should be bright enough to keep them from the temptation offered by revolutionary schemes. A condition of this is economic insight. It can be gained early in life and that too by the great mass of our people.

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TEACHING OF ECONOMICS AT THE MASSACHUSETTS
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My experience in teaching political economy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology can be of only limited value to others, for the instruction in an engineering school is necessarily subordinated to a definite professional object. The course in economics is prescribed and also narrowly limited as to time.

It must be adapted to the needs of a great variety of students, many of whom would not, unless coerced, take the subject—not so much on account of any hostile prejudice, as because of a greater interest in other studies. The course must also, owing to restriction in time, be laid out with considerable care in order to emphasize certain portions even at the expense of slighting other parts.

Naturally these conditions are not ideal. I often envy my associates in other institutions where the classes are made up of students who choose the study of their own free will, and where by comparison there is prodigality of time allotted to the subject. And yet there may be compensatory advantages. If the student is driven to the task, the instructor must exert himself in every possible way to make the study attractive; he must awaken dormant interest as well as guide and sustain the enthusiasm of those who naturally enjoy the subject. The problem therefore demands a careful consideration of the relative importance of the different branches of economics, a study of perspective and proportion. This necessitates a constant revision to meet the shifting needs of successive classes as new problems of special importance arise.

The conditions under which the course is now given are as follows: The subject is assigned for the first term in the third or junior year. There are three exercises a week for fifteen weeks, thus giving in all, after subtracting holidays and other interruptions, about forty-two exercises. The schedule allows for preparation one hour to each exercise. The number in the class has ranged during the past fifteen years between 275 and 350. All the instruction, including the reading of papers, conferences, section discussion, and lectures, is given by one associate and myself. The students are required to read a textbook, as Walker's *Political Economy*, Seager's *Economics*, or Ely's *Elementary Principles of Economics*. Two of the exercises each week have been devoted to lectures and one to section work. In the lectures emphasis has been placed on certain descriptive material for the purpose of explaining the actual facts of economic life and organization more fully than is done in the text-

book. In the section exercise the time is devoted to the discussion of fundamental principles. Two or three questions are placed upon the blackboard and students are allowed about 20 or 25 minutes for writing the answers. On the basis of this written work the discussion is developed, and as far as possible the students are encouraged to antagonize each other.

The conditions thus named by no means make a satisfactory arrangement. There ought to be a larger number of instructors in order to give the students proper individual attention. As, however, there are but few courses in economics in an engineering school, and all except the required course occupy a relatively subordinate position, there is no opportunity to keep employed any considerable staff of assistants in the second term. As assistance cannot easily be engaged for a single half-year, it is necessary to adjust the teaching staff to the minimum load rather than to the temporary maximum need. 'As I have not the disposition to repeat the instruction in a given week more than three or four times, and as I have not the courage to ask my assistant to repeat more than four or five times, it naturally follows that the sections are larger than is desirable. In the twenty-odd years of teaching elementary economics I have had sections varying in size from twenty to sixty; I believe about thirty is the most satisfactory. The number should never run over forty, otherwise students will not have a frequent enough opportunity to enter into discussion. Apparently there is about one cranky student in every thirty, and it is exceedingly advantageous to inoculate each section with one crank. He enlivens the discussion and if properly managed is a stimulating factor.

I do not know whether the students who fall to my ministrations are especially different in intelligence or experience from those who attend other institutions, but I find a woeful lack of exact knowledge in regard to the economic world as it exists at the present time, which makes it in my opinion unwise, if not absurd, to develop the theoretical aspects of the subject until this preliminary information is set forth. As there is not time for both, the theoretical portion is neglected more than I could wish.

So much then for the conditions as they exist. Next year

the plan is to be slightly changed by giving only one lecture each week and increasing the section work to two exercises. The experiment will be tried with considerable misgiving, for it means from fourteen to sixteen hours of section work for the two instructors, and whether they can initiate stimulating discussion under these somewhat monotonous conditions remains to be determined.

Every teacher undoubtedly has an ideal which he would like to carry out. If there were time, my present inclination would be to devote the first half-year entirely to descriptive economics, giving particular attention first, to the conditions of production, the factory system, the corporation, wages, agriculture, and the marketing of goods; and second, to the monetary and financial organization including banking, stock and produce exchanges, speculation, and taxation. During this term I would carefully avoid theoretical analysis and discussion; with this foundation I would take up in the second term the theory and try to make it a course in logic in which economic data furnish the illustrative material.

As the subject is now taught, it seems to me there is great danger that the student will too often leave the subject with but a hazy notion of its real significance. He has no systematic knowledge of the economic world, nor any well-defined theory of its workings. Conditions have changed during the past twenty-five years. Economic life has become more complicated and youth does not have the opportunity to become so intimately acquainted with economic processes. There must therefore be a far greater insistence upon laboratory methods which will provide the missing experience.

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SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS OF GENERAL ECONOMICS

In the first place, let the teacher of elementary economics take as his motto: "Beware of the man of one book"; and let him impress this upon his class. The one book that is taken as a text—and there always should be a text—ought to be thor-